



# News Release

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State of New Mexico  
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## **New Technology Preserves Some of the Nation's Oldest Communities**

**Santa Fe** — A summit among New Mexico's 19 pueblos and the state historic preservation office will guide development of a smartphone and tablet app for surveying some of the oldest architecture in the U.S. and assist pueblos preserve their traditional communities, the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Department of Cultural Affairs announced today.

The "Pueblo Nations Preservation Summit" will be a venue for tribes to present recent and ongoing preservation successes, and discuss different cultural approaches with state preservationists for reusing historic buildings. The summit will determine features for a digital application to record information about residential and other historic pueblo buildings and generate maps illustrating their conditions. The high-tech tool will be piloted at three pueblos.

"The collaboration in New Mexico will build on successful partnerships forged in the past between our office and the pueblos of Ohkay Owingeh, Santo Domingo, Taos, Cochiti and Nambe, which have pursued preservation in their communities tailored to their traditions and needs," said Jeff Pappas, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director of HPD.

The pilot projects and the summit are possible because HPD has received one of 13 U.S. Department of the Interior grants awarded to states working to preserve heritage in underserved and minority communities. Nationally, the grants total \$500,000 and are aimed at diversifying the National Register of Historic Places by adding resources also associated with Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and the LGBT community to the list of historic places worthy of preservation.

The \$114,306 New Mexico project is funded by a \$59,627 federal grant. Approximately \$24,700 has been raised as a match through private, state and pueblo funds.

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Tomasita Duran, of the Ohkay Owingeh Housing Authority, said a multi-million-dollar housing project blossomed in her community because the pueblo balanced federal and state preservation laws with the community's goals for rehabilitating centuries-old housing that in some cases had been vacant for generations.

"What made our tribal council uncomfortable was the state telling us what we can or cannot do," she said. "This is our pueblo, our most sacred site. So we came up with a way of complying with the law that also made us comfortable."

Ohkay Owingeh received a \$7,500 HPD grant in 2006 to inventory historic housing at the pueblo's traditional core, Owe'neh Bupingeh. It provided training for Pueblo youth in GPS and building documentation who in turn worked with tribal elders who shared oral histories of the village built around four plazas.

The grant has since been leveraged into more than \$9 million for updating infrastructure and rehabilitating homes Duran said in many cases had no bathrooms or other amenities that people take for granted.

"Our preservation plan is about today and tomorrow and making our community a living place," Duran said. "When we share our preservation process—approved by HPD—with other tribes, I tell them that each tribe may do it in a different way that suits their particular needs."

To date, 34 historic homes in the traditional village have been rehabilitated. The rehabilitations sensitively balance modern needs with traditional adobe architecture, and the homes have returned to being integral parts of the community. Similar projects are underway at Cochiti and Santo Domingo pueblos.

Following the summit, a firm will be selected to develop the phone and tablet application that members of the three pilot pueblos will use in the field. In addition, a regional architecture and planning firm will provide assistance to analyze and map information so the pueblos can plan for future preservation and revitalization.

Data gathered by the tribes will be used to update some of the first National Register listings in New Mexico, several written nearly 50 years ago. Updating the listings enhances opportunities to protect and preserve cultural resources by providing a current and more accurate picture of their historic significance.

— 30 —

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